

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 IO-13 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-15 OMB-01 SSM-05 ACDA-10 NRC-07 MC-02 ERDA-07
/124 W

-----240847Z 118243 /14

R 240638Z DEC 76
FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1062
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
USUN NEW YORK 568

UNCLAS DAMASCUS 8753

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PFOR SY KG XF
SUBJ: ASAD INTERVIEW WITH EGYPTIAN RADIO

1. EMBASSY WISHES TO HIGHLIGHT POINTS MADE BY PRES ASAD
DURING RECENT INTERVIEW WITH EGYPTIAN RADIO (FBIS
LD172214Y).

UNIFIED ARAB DELEGATION TO GENEVA CONFERENCE:

ASAD FOCUSED ON NECESSITY OF CONVENING GENEVA MEPC AND OF
FACILITATING PALESTINIAN ATTENDANCE AT TALKS. HE OBSERVED
THAT "THERE IS NOTHING TO PREVENT PLO REPRESENTATION WITHIN
ONE ARAB DELEGATION" WHICH WOULD INCLUDE REPS FROM EGYPT,
SYRIA AND ALSO JORDAN AS LONG AS THIS DID NOT SIGNIFY NON-
RECOGNITION OF PLO AS LEGITIMATE PALESTINIAN REP. HE CONTINUED
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BY REITERATING USEFULNESS OF THIS IDEA AND THEN
ADDED, "I BELIEVE THAT IT IS PREFERABLE TO HAVE ARABS
REPRESENTED IN ONE DELEGATION BECAUSE THAT AFFIRMS THAT
CAUSE IS ONE. IT IS BETTER NOT TO LET ANY OF US HAVE
FREEDOM OF ACTION SEPARATELY. I DO NOT BELIEVE ISRAEL
WILL AGREE TO SUCH A UNIFIED DELEGATION".

GENEVA CONFERENCE:

ASAD ASSERTED HE DID NOT CONTEMPLATE PROPOSING AGENDA FOR GENEVA CONFERENCE, BUT HE STATED THAT NEGOTIATIONS MUST ACHIEVE "COMPLETE WITHDRAWAL FROM ARAB LANDS OCCUPIED IN 1967 -- AND I EMPHASIZE COMPLETE WITHDRAWAL "" END SECURE RIGHTS OF PALESTINIANS". HE DOWNPLAYED NECESSITY OF ASAD-SADAT-HUSSEIN-ARAFAT MEETING TO COORDINATE GENEVA POSITIONS. ASAD SAID HE ANTICIPATED ISRAELIS WOULD REFUSE TO ATTEND CONFERENCE OR WOULD PROCRASTINATE. ASAD SUGGESTED ARABS MUST LOOK FOR MULTIPLE OPTIONS TO ATTAIN THEIR GOALS, BUT WAIVED ASIDE HELSINKI-TYPE CONFERENCE AS "ATTEMPT TO MISLEAD INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC OPINION".

NEW AMERICAN ADMINISTRATION:

ASAD NOTED IMPROVEMENT IN U.S. RELATIONS WITH ARAB WORLD IN PAST FEW YEARS BUT CLAIMED THIS HAD NOT AFFECTED U.S. SUPPORT FOR ISRAEL. HE ADDED THAT GENEVA CONFERENCE COULD NOT SUCCEED WITHOUT U.S. SUPPORT.

LEBANON:

HE REITERATED INTENTION TO WITHDRAW SYRIAN FORCES FROM LEBANON ONCE SECURITY SITUATION STABILIZED. HE HOPED THIS WOULD OCCUR QUICKLY, "BECAUSE WE NEED THESE TROOPS FOR CONFRONTATION WITH ENEMY". HE ACCUSED ISRAEL OF SENDING ITS TROOPS TO SOUTH LEBANON BORDER
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TO OBSTRUCT PEACE EFFORTS, AND ASSERTED THAT IF PRES. SARKIS REQUESTED ARAB FORCES TO MOVE TO SOUTH LEBANON, "THEY WILL MOVE WITHOUT HESITATION".

JORDAN:

ASAD CLAIMED SYRIA HAS NOT TRIED TO RECONCILE JORDANIANS AND PALESTINIANS AND DOES NOT CONTEMPLATE THIS NOW. HOWEVER, HE WISHED FOR END TO THEIR MISUNDERSTANDING.

NUCLEAR WEAPONS:

NOTING THAT ISRAEL ON ITS WAY TO POSSESSING NUCLEAR WEAPONS, ASAD STATED THAT HE FACED TWO CHOICES -- PREVENT ISRAEL FROM POSSESSING BOMB OR TRY TO OBTAIN BOMB FOR ARABS. "IT SEEMS THAT LATTER CHOICE MORE POSSIBLE WITH RESPECT TO US".

2. COMMENT: ASAD'S CLEAR PREFERENCE FOR UNIFIED ARAB
DELEGATION AT GENEVA MEPC WAS APPARENTLY NOT REFLECTED
IN RESULTS OF CAIRO TALKS.
MURPHY

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS CONFERENCES, PEACE TALKS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 24 DEC 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976DAMASC08753
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760472-0337
From: DAMASCUS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19761214/aaaaaluv.tel
Line Count: 119
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: morefirh
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 29 APR 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <29 APR 2004 by GarlanWA>; APPROVED <30 DEC 2004 by morefirh>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ASAD INTERVIEW WITH EGYPTIAN RADIO
TAGS: PFOR, SY, EG, XF, (ASAD, HAFIZ AL)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006